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Australia and the Secretive Exploitation of the Chatham Islands to 1842

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Keywords

chatham, australia, exploitation, 1842, secretive, islands

Disciplines

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Australia and the Secretive Exploitation of the Chatham Islands to 1842

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ABSTRACT

The European discovery of the Chatham Islands in 1791 resulted in significant consequences for its indigenous Moriōri people. The colonial Australian influence on the Chathams has received little scholarly attention. This article argues that the young colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land led the exploitation of the archipelago before its annexation to New Zealand in 1842. The Chathams became a secretive outpost of the colonial economy, especially the sealing trade. Colonial careering transformed the islands: environmental destruction accompanied economic exploitation, with deleterious results for the Moriōri. When two Māori iwi (tribes) from New Zealand's North Island invaded in 1835, Moriōri struggled to respond as a consequence of the colonial encounter. Mobility and technology gained from the Australian colonies enabled and influenced the invasion itself, and derogatory colonial stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples informed the genocide that ensued. Hence this article writes the Chathams into Australian history and Australia into Chathams history, showing that discussions of the early colonial economy, environment, and genocide must consider the wider South Pacific context in conjunction with events internal to the colonies.

KEYWORDS

Chatham Islands; Moriōri;
New South Wales;
colonialism; sealing;
careering; colonial genocide

Introduction

On 29 November 1791, the British brig *Chatham* sighted islands in the South Pacific where no European knew land to exist. Commanded by Lieutenant William Broughton, the *Chatham* was part of the Vancouver Expedition of 1791–1795, Captain George Vancouver's voyage of exploration to Pacific North America. Vancouver commanded the *Discovery*, and when the two vessels left Dusky Sound in New Zealand's South Island for Tahiti, they followed different courses. The *Chatham* bestowed its name on the archipelago it sighted, known to the native Moriōri people as Rēkohu and situated 870 kilometres east of New Zealand.¹ The arrival of Europeans was startling for Moriōri. They had had no contact with other humans for centuries.² Broughton recorded that “their surprize [*sic*] and exclamations can hardly be imagined; they pointed to the sun, and then to us, as if

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¹The islands are also known in Māori as Wharekauri. I use their English name in accordance with the most common current usage.

²Michael King, *Moriōri: A People Rediscovered* (Auckland: Penguin, 1989), 40.

to ask, whether we had come from thence".³ The encounter was largely peaceful but ended in confusion when a Moriori, Tamakaroro, was shot fatally by one of Broughton's crew for reasons that remain uncertain. Afterwards, a Moriori council concluded the visitors were not cannibals, as they did not take Tamakaroro's body; hence the council resolved to welcome any future visitors peacefully.⁴

The European discovery of the Chathams would soon have significant consequences, bringing the archipelago's existence to the attention of private traders in Britain's young Australian colony, New South Wales (NSW). The Moriori decision to give a peaceful welcome would be fateful, ensuring that visitors could pursue their goals without active resistance. This article covers the pre-colonial period from 1791 to 1842, during which Europeans knew of the Chathams' existence but no government claimed or exercised authority over them. The Chathams became integrated into wider imperial networks even though they sat beyond the official bounds of empire: the territory of colonial NSW encompassed "all the islands adjacent in the Pacific Ocean" between the latitudes of 10°37'S and 43°39'S.⁵ The northernmost tip of the Chathams, Cape Young, lay less than three latitudinal minutes outside the southern boundary, and at no point did Britain assert sovereignty over the islands until the 1840s.⁶ They finally fell under imperial control in April 1842, when by letters patent they were drawn within New Zealand—itself only opened to regulated British settlement in February 1840 and separated from NSW that November.⁷

The main sources of contact, particularly to 1835, were sealers and traders based out of Sydney and, later, Hobart, in Van Diemen's Land (VDL). Exploitation of the islands was secretive, both to avoid disclosing information to commercial rivals and because colonial craft were not permitted to operate south of the oceanic border of 43°39'S. The extension of NSW's northern and southern boundaries into the Pacific, with no eastern limit, meant that trade between Sydney and the islands that NSW encompassed in the South Pacific was considered domestic, while otherwise protecting the East India Company's monopoly on British trade between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn.⁸ Since the Chathams were not within this zone, they fell beyond the concern of NSW administrators and are conspicuous by their absence in official records. From 1840 to 1842, the fledgling New Zealand government in Auckland was scarcely aware of the islands to its east—it was challenged simply to extend its authority to Wellington—and, once it gained the Chathams, this official ignorance continued until the appointment of a resident in 1855.⁹ Thus, without a

³William Broughton, in George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World 1791–1795*, vol. 1, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (London: Hakluyt Society, 1984), 387.

⁴John Amery, "Koche, King of Pitt," *Catholic World* 17, no. 100 (1873): 549.

⁵As outlined in Governor Arthur Phillip's first commission, 12 October 1786, *Historical Records of Australia (HRA)*, Series I, vol. 1, 1–2.

⁶Britain instead disclaimed sovereignty over New Zealand repeatedly (without mentioning the Chathams at all), as described in the memorandum attached to James Stephen to John Backhouse, 18 March 1840, *British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies; New Zealand*, hereafter *BPPNZ* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), vol. 3, 116–17.

⁷Lord Stanley to Governor William Hobson, 21 April 1842, *BPPNZ*, vol. 2, 443.

⁸John M. R. Young, *Australia's Pacific Frontier: Economic and Cultural Expansion into the Pacific, 1795–1885* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1967), 4; Rhys Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands* (Canberra: Roebuck, 1982), 75. This book has separate pagination for its two sections. S indicates sealing section; W indicates whaling section.

⁹Even at the peak of NSW's engagement with the Chathams in the 1830s, they do not appear in the *HRA*, Series I, vols 15–18. The Chathams are almost entirely absent from the *BPPNZ*, vols 1–4, and none of the few mentions reference the events described in this article.

corpus of administrative records, there has been little analysis of interactions between Moriori and visitors.

What were the patterns defining the engagement of sailors with the Chathams and how did this affect the Moriori economy, lifestyle, and demographics? Newspapers, memoirs, journals, and ship logs furnish greater insights. It is time that the Chathams are written into Australian history and the Australian colonies into the history of the Chathams.

This article shows that private individuals based in NSW and VDL drove exploitation of the Chathams with major consequences for all aspects of Moriori life. The Chathams became a secret, unofficial outpost of the colonial economy, and economic activity went hand in hand with environmental upheavals that disturbed Moriori food and clothing sources and unsettled the islands' ecological balance. Contact had grave consequences when, in 1835, two Māori iwi (tribes) from the North Island of New Zealand invaded the Chathams and perpetrated genocidal violence.¹⁰ The mobility, technology, and racial attitudes of the iwi betrayed a colonial influence, and Moriori struggled to respond to the arrival of Māori because of the deleterious effects of previous colonial exploitation. Yet the occurrence of genocide cannot be understood solely through the lens of genocide studies. This article reveals how the violence emerged from the context of economic and environmental changes precipitated by colonial contact with the Chathams. It also reveals that debate about genocide in Australia cannot be insular—colonisers not only committed racially motivated violence against Aboriginal peoples, but also played a pivotal, if unintended, role in facilitating similar violence elsewhere in the Pacific.

Inattention to the connections between the Chathams and Australian colonies formed in the early nineteenth century has been shaped by the inadequate integration of Australian and New Zealand history, reflecting what Tony Ballantyne describes as the anachronistic deployment of the nation-state.¹¹ Appropriation of David Lambert and Alan Lester's concept of imperial careering allows connections to be made explicit in the absence of official records. Careering suggests not only the agency, self-advancement, and economic interests of private imperial subjects, but also mobility, chance encounters, and a more disordered and decentred approach to history.¹² Unlike Lambert and Lester, however, this study is not concerned as much with the contribution of specific individuals or their biographical trajectory on the imperial fringe, but with the cumulative consequences of hundreds—possibly thousands—of imperial careers upon a small extra-imperial archipelago. These individuals interacted with the Chathams on their own initiative, without or beyond authority derived from London, Sydney, or Hobart. Other visitors played a role, especially whalers from France and the US, but they only rose to pre-eminence in the final few years of the pre-colonial period before dominating the first few decades of New Zealand's control—decades that fall beyond this article's scope.

The archipelago's obscurity necessitates clarification. Moriori traditional knowledge describes a dual colonisation, first by the ancestor Rongomaiwhenua from East Polynesia and then by subsequent migrations from mainland New Zealand. The standard view of

¹⁰André Brett, "The Miserable Remnant of this Ill-Used People': Colonial Genocide and the Moriori of New Zealand's Chatham Islands," *Journal of Genocide Research* 17, no. 2 (2015): 133–52.

¹¹Tony Ballantyne, "On Place, Space and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," *New Zealand Journal of History* 45, no. 1 (2011): 55.

¹²David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects," in *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Lambert and Lester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21–4.

historians and archaeologists is that Moriori are descended from or closely related to the same East Polynesians who settled in New Zealand and became Māori. The date of arrival on the Chathams is uncertain, occurring between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹³ Some authorities, including the Waitangi Tribunal, consider Moriori to be a Māori tribe unique through isolation; Michael King provides a more elegant distinction when he describes Māori and Moriori as “related but separate peoples”.¹⁴ The last known full-blooded Moriori, Tommy Solomon, died in 1933, but a fetish for full-bloodedness overlooks the survival of Moriori people, who have experienced a cultural revival since the 1980s. Moriori, Māori, and Pākehā (white people) live side-by-side on the Chathams today; many Islanders descend from all three.

The topic of genocide is controversial, both for Australia and the Chathams. I follow the standard definition of acts committed with intent to destroy an ethnic group, specifically encompassing the acts of killing, prevention of births, and imposition of living conditions not conducive to survival. I acknowledge, however, that genocide need not require official policies of extermination; outcomes are sufficient to demonstrate genocide, and individuals as well as states can commit it.¹⁵ The question of whether or not Australian settler colonialism was genocidal is contested. The occurrence of frontier conflict is not disputed, but much ink has been spilled to debate its extent, whether it constituted genocide, and its implications for Australia today.¹⁶ I do not intend to argue one way or another about genocide within Australia. What this article shows is that violence in colonial Australia was not only local, and South Pacific violence not a separate phenomenon; the colonies were connected to the killing of native peoples beyond their shores. Tom Lawson has described recently the role of Britain in the genocide of the Tasmanian Aboriginals.¹⁷ Similarly, genocide on the Chathams was no isolated occurrence, but defined by contact with Australia.

Researching the early nineteenth-century Chathams presents difficulties because of a paucity of sources. E. J. Tapp claims that the history of New Zealand sealing, a profession based in NSW that first connected the colony with the Chathams, cannot be written fully because of inadequate records.¹⁸ Yet there is much still to be said about the Chathams—absent from Tapp’s work—and multiple historiographies to reconcile with one another. Unfortunately, histories of trans-Tasman contact rarely look beyond New Zealand’s

¹³Michael King, *Mori: A People Rediscovered* (Auckland: Penguin, 1989), 22 suggests thirteenth or fourteenth century; Atholl Anderson estimates as late as the mid-1500s (though probably earlier) in “A Fragile Plenty: Pre-European Māori and the New Zealand Environment,” in *Making a New Land: Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, ed. Tom Brooking and Eric Pawson (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013), 40; B. G. McFadgen asserts 1500–1600 in “Archaeology and Holocene Sand Dune Stratigraphy on Chatham Island,” *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 24, no. 1 (1994): 35–7.

¹⁴Waitangi Tribunal (WT), *Rekohu: A Report on Moriori and Ngāti Mutunga Claims in the Chatham Islands* (Wai 64, 2001), 21; Michael King, *A Land Apart: The Chatham Islands of New Zealand* (Auckland: Random House, 1990), 11.

¹⁵See for example A. Dirk Moses (resting on Raphael Lemkin’s original conceptualisation of genocide), “Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History,” in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. Moses (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 17–19.

¹⁶Key texts include Colin Tatz’s extensive output; the special edition of *Aboriginal History* 25 (2001) edited by Ann Curthoys and John Docker; Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide* (Adelaide: Crawford House, 2000); and Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain? The Question of Genocide in Australia’s History* (Ringwood: Penguin, 2001). For an overview of the frontier conflict debate and its rise to prominence in the late 1990s, see chapter eight of Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003).

¹⁷Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

¹⁸E. J. Tapp, *Early New Zealand: A Dependency of New South Wales, 1788–1841* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press), 19.

east coast.¹⁹ Australian historians glance only tentatively across the Tasman. D. R. Hainsworth's study of Sydney's early traders, which features extensive coverage of sealing, never mentions the Chathams, and significant recent histories of the early colonies mention sealing only briefly with fleeting mention of New Zealand.²⁰ James Boyce is more attentive than most to sealing, locating the origins of European settlement of Tasmania in the arrival of sealers from Sydney in the 1800s. He places this within a wider Australian context of European sealing settlements preceding official colonisation in both Victoria and Western Australia.²¹ But this pattern extended east as well: these sealers often were, or worked for, the same men who plundered New Zealand and the Chathams.

A small but valuable historiography exists on the Chathams and Moriori. Most notable are the narratives of Michael King, which brought an accurate depiction of Moriori to the New Zealand public for the first time. In places, I build on his research and that of the Waitangi Tribunal in its *Rekohu* report. These accounts, however, observe the presence of Europeans in the early nineteenth century without identifying Australia's distinctive contribution.²² King tells a history of Moriori from their perspective, where the legacies of contact are more important than the geographic origins of those initiating the contact; the Waitangi Tribunal's interest was in determining land rights and historical grievances between Moriori, Chathams Māori, and the New Zealand Crown. Another work on which I draw is Rhys Richards's history of sealing and whaling at the Chathams. It describes in depth the islands' early visitors but it is a chronological narrative—often a documentary summary—in which colonial sealers and whalers mingle with Americans, French, and others.²³ Richards captures the transnational nature of oceangoing industries but does not highlight unique contributions of specific groups.

The early nineteenth-century Chathams archive is limited. There are no contemporary documents from Moriori or Māori and few from Pākehā, with the Chathams appearing only rarely and ephemerally in official correspondence. Colonial press reports are scarce, rarely comprising more than shipping news. Hence this article is, by necessity, speculative in places, reliant upon fleeting hints of evidence. Richards located many accounts, but missed or could not access some used here. Newspaper sources are complemented by memoirs and records produced by a few Moriori and Pākehā in the second half of the nineteenth century, based on interviews and oral tradition. John Amery published the story of Koche in 1867, a Moriori survivor of the 1835 invasion whose father was present at the first European contact in 1791. Amery embellished details, but the central narrative is reliable.²⁴ Most useful is the collaborative work of multi-lingual Moriori leader Hirawanu Tapu with Alexander Shand, a Pākehā and son of the New

¹⁹Two better examples, although still not very attentive to the Chathams, are Anne Salmond, *Between Worlds: Early Exchanges Between Māori and Europeans, 1773–1815* (Auckland: Viking, 1997); and Rachel Standfield, *Race and Identity in the Tasman World, 1769–1840* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012).

²⁰D. R. Hainsworth, *The Sydney Traders: Simeon Lord and His Contemporaries, 1788–1821* (North Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1971), though the Chathams do appear in a map on 135; Henry Reynolds, *A History of Tasmania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Grace Karskens, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2009).

²¹James Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2008), 15–19.

²²Particularly notable publications include King, *A Land Apart*; King, *Mori*; WT, *Rekohu*; and Douglas Sutton, "A Culture History of the Chatham Islands," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 89, no.1 (1980): 67–94.

²³Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*.

²⁴Amery, "Koche". Rhys Richards and Bill Carter establish Amery's authorship in *A Decade of Disasters: The Chatham Islands from 1866 to 1875* (Wellington: Paremat Press, 2009), 173–4. Amery probably acquired Koche's story secondhand via Frederick Hunt, who employed Koche for years, but Richards and Carter conclude the core details are authentic. Koche's name was most likely spelt *Ko Tch*, but here I use the form by which he is commonly referred.

Zealand government's first official resident to the Chathams. Hirawanu, also an invasion survivor, undertook the extensive interviews that informed Shand's published work.²⁵ Such was Hirawanu's stature that his death in 1900 has been considered the end of Moriori as a living language or culture.²⁶

Early encounters

For centuries, Moriori had no contact with the outside world, adapting to survive on the harsh, windswept Chathams. They resided on the main Chatham Island and nearby Pitt Island, divided into nine tribes. Each tribe inhabited a specific district, exercising exclusive rights to its resources, and individuals lived in family groups that led predominantly itinerant lives to maximise usage of seasonally available resources.²⁷ Anthropological research reveals that seals and marine birds were the basis of their diet.²⁸ Multiple species of seal inhabit the Chathams, with the New Zealand fur seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) most common. Moriori relied upon marine food sources to an extreme unique in Polynesia, attesting to adaptive abilities in an environment where land resources were few but marine resources plentiful.²⁹ Religious prohibitions that defined daily life limited over-exploitation of resources.³⁰ Moriori observed Nunuku's Law, based on the tradition of an ancestor sickened by violence. In the event of any dispute—be it over resources, boundaries, or relationships—Nunuku's Law demanded the performance of ritualised combat that ended at the first sign of abrasion or blood.³¹ Large-scale violence could destabilise the delicate equilibrium in which Moriori lived with the environment. The pursuit of a peaceful existence was therefore not an ideological imperative, but an environmental necessity.

Moriiori waited some time after Broughton's visit in 1791 for their next encounter with the outside world, but, in the 1800s, the Chathams became a secretive outpost of a budding NSW trade: sealing. Sydney's first economic frontier was not inland, where the Blue Mountains were perceived as an impassable barrier; rather, it was the Pacific Ocean, where considerable profits could be accrued at low cost to a colony already dependent on maritime technology.³² It is unknown who visited the Chathams next after Broughton or when. Koche's recollections contain the only record of this visit, in which he was almost certainly recounting his father's testimony. Some years after the *Chatham's* visit, a sealing vessel entered Waitangi Bay on the main Chatham Island. A Moriori man placed one end

²⁵Shand's most notable work appeared in two series: "The Occupation of the Chatham Islands by the Maoris in 1835," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 2, no. 2 (1892–1893) hereafter "Occupation" (part number); and "The Moriori People of the Chatham Islands: Their Traditions and History," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 7, no. 2 (1894–1898) hereafter "Moriori People" (part number).

²⁶King, *A Land Apart*, 15.

²⁷Rhys Richards, "A Tentative Population Distribution Map of the Morioris of Chatham Island, Circa 1790," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 81, no. 3 (1972): 352.

²⁸Michelle Horwood, "Trace Element Analysis of Human Bone from the Prehistoric Moriori of the Chatham Islands, with Special Reference to Diet," *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 19, no. 1 (1989): 59–71.

²⁹Carolyn J. Quinn, "Stable Isotopes and Diet: Indications of the Marine and Terrestrial Component in the Diets of Prehistoric Populations from New Zealand and the Pacific" (MA thesis, University of Otago, 1990), 216–20.

³⁰Richards, "Distribution Map," 356. Nonetheless, Moriori had a destructive environmental influence and were probably responsible for driving away Hooker's sea lion from the Chathams (McFadgen, "Archaeology and Holocene Sand Dune Stratigraphy," 35).

³¹King, *Moriiori*, 28.

³²J. M. R. Young, "Australia's Pacific Frontier," *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 12, no. 47 (1966): 373–4.

of a plant in the hand of the ship's captain, held the other end while making a speech of welcome, and threw his cloak over the captain.³³ Richards estimates this encounter was no earlier than 1804. By that time, the Bass Strait sealing grounds were waning and sealers began venturing into New Zealand waters. Secrecy, both to avoid disclosing a new field to rival gangs and to avoid infringing the effective prohibition on commercial activity by colonial craft south of 43°39'S, meant that visits went unrecorded.³⁴

The youthful career of Jacky Marmon indicates that private entrepreneurs had brought the Chathams into NSW's economy by 1807. Marmon was born in Sydney in 1798, sailed often to New Zealand as a child, and became a "Pākehā-Māori", a European who lived among Māori prior to formal colonisation and participated in their culture.³⁵ His recollections possess a somewhat difficult character, in that others edited the two published versions. The more reserved *New Zealand Herald* version of 1880, written to accommodate Victorian-era sensibilities, contains little on Marmon's childhood, skipping the Chathams entirely.³⁶ The *Auckland Star* version of 1881 is sensationalised and contains unverifiable digressions. Trevor Bentley, Marmon's most recent biographer, identifies these as insertions by Frederick Maning, a self-interested editor who wished to present Marmon's story in a way that compared unfavourably with Maning's own fame as a Pākehā-Māori.³⁷ The *Star* account's precise recollections of the Chathams, however, reflect Marmon's attention to detail. Maning had no motive to embellish them; he exaggerated Marmon's adult alcoholism and violence.

Marmon, aged nine when he visited the Chathams aboard the *Commerce* in December 1807, recalled several sealing gangs.³⁸ These men hunted seals in considerable numbers—the *Commerce* carried off 300 sealskins—in competition with Moriori for their traditional prey. Notably, Marmon remembered Hororeka, a Moriori man who not only boarded the *Commerce* but had also travelled previously to the Bay of Islands and learnt enough English to act as interpreter. Hence, contact was well established prior to the *Commerce*'s voyage. Sealers sojourned on the archipelago for months, and although there is little evidence, sexual liaisons with Moriori women were probable. Shand records that sealers "consorted" with local women, leaving behind "the usual train of syphylitic [*sic*] diseases".³⁹ The experience of Aboriginal women with sealers in southern Australia—some of whom may have also visited the Chathams—undoubtedly indicates a wider pattern.⁴⁰

Other more circumstantial evidence suggests a covert Sydney-led sealing bonanza on the Chathams from 1804 to 1810. The *Contest*, which left Sydney in August 1804, intended to visit the Chathams and the Bounty Islands. However, the vessel never made it and sealed in Fiordland instead, where, in one crewmember's words, they "killed several thousands of these harmless creatures" before returning to Sydney in February 1805.⁴¹ This

³³King, *Mori*, 28.

³⁴Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 75.

³⁵For more on Pākehā-Māori, see Trevor Bentley, *Pākehā Māori: The Extraordinary Story of the Europeans Who Lived As Māori in Early New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 1999).

³⁶*New Zealand Herald*, 9 October 1880, 6.

³⁷Trevor Bentley, *Cannibal Jack: The Life and Times of Jacky Marmon, a Pākehā-Māori* (Auckland: Penguin, 2010), 17–19.

³⁸*Auckland Star*, 19 November 1881, supplement.

³⁹Shand, "Occupation" (part two), 160.

⁴⁰Lynette Russell, *Roving Mariners: Australian Aboriginal Whalers and Sealers in the Southern Oceans, 1790–1870* (Albany: State University of New York, 2012), chapter five.

⁴¹*Sydney Gazette*, 17 February 1805, 4; Jorgen Jorgenson, *The Convict King: Being the Life and Adventures of Jorgen Jorgenson*, ed. James Francis Hogan (Hobart: Oldham, Beddome and Meredith, 1932 [1835]).

occurred for one simple reason: the *Contest* leaked so severely that the adventure into a poorly known ocean was abandoned. Instead, the vessel limped home with profits intact.⁴² Its original destination is evidence that Sydney entrepreneurs knew the Chathams' potential. Tremendous success at the Antipodes Islands, hundreds of kilometres south, distracted sealers from the Chathams during the summer of 1805–1806, but in subsequent years they returned in force.⁴³ The first confirmed NSW sealers arrived aboard the *Antipode* in November 1807 under the command of a Captain Scott. While there, they met American captain Mayhew Folger on the *Topaz* a few weeks before he discovered the *Bounty* mutineers on Pitcairn Island. In a region where other islands were unpopulated, the presence of Moriori disappointed both Folger and Scott.⁴⁴

The Chathams became a far-flung part of the nascent colonial economy, and prominent Sydney emancipist businessmen such as Simeon Lord, Henry Kable, and James Underwood played leading roles. These men furthered their careers and amassed wealth on the British Empire's hazy fringe. They possessed the ships that visited the Chathams and stood to gain the most from exploiting their resources. Lord, Kable, and Underwood owned—with dubious legality—the *Commerce*, aboard which Marmon visited the Chathams; Lord was also linked to the *Antipode*.⁴⁵ It is only possible to speculate on other visitors for most of this period. Some recorded visits—Folger's *Topaz* in November 1807, the *Pegasus* under Samuel Chace in August 1809—demonstrate familiarity with geographical nomenclature. How did they acquire these names? The only reasonable suggestion is contact with previous visitors. The men who owned, captained, and crewed the ships were typically based in Sydney and would have known the industry's secrets and gossip. Star Key, for instance, may have been named for Lord and Co.'s *Star*—it made two trips from Sydney in 1806, both of sufficient duration to reach the Chathams—and Dart Quay off Pitt Island might acknowledge the *Dart*, absent from Sydney for a year from April 1807.⁴⁶

All of this activity occurred whether Moriori liked it or not. They were appalled; their practice was to only take old male seals and remove carcasses from the rocks.⁴⁷ Furthermore, they could not relocate in the manner of sealers once the field was exhausted. William Baucke, a child of missionaries who grew up on the Chathams and became fluent in Moriori, late in life wrote on the "extinct race". He reports that Moriori were indignant about the rapacious slaughter, and from an early date correctly predicted the demise of seals on the Chathams.⁴⁸ Seals were precious not just for their dietary importance but also because they were the main source of clothing. Sealskins were protection against the Chathams' cold and, with an abundant supply, Moriori lost knowledge of how to make warm garments from materials such as flax.⁴⁹ Wealth in Sydney was built on deprivation on the Chathams; sealing careerists undermined indigenous resources and traditions. In accordance with the resolution made after Broughton's visit, however, Moriori offered no obstructions. Instead, as Koche reminisced, sealers found Moriori to

⁴²Jorgen Jorgenson, *Observations*, trans. Lena Knight, ed. Rhys Richards (Wellington: Paremata Press, 1996), 23.

⁴³Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 105.

⁴⁴Mayhew Folger, 21–25 November 1807, *Topaz* journal, MS 220, log 105, Nantucket Historical Association.

⁴⁵Hainsworth, *Sydney Traders*, 132; Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 165.

⁴⁶Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 155.

⁴⁷Shand, "Moriore People" (part one), 83n14.

⁴⁸William Baucke, "An Extinct Race," *New Zealand Herald*, 14 November 1922, 1 (supplement).

⁴⁹Shand, "Moriore People" (part one), 83.

be “hospitable, cheerful friends, and willing assistants”.⁵⁰ Moriori tried to craft new clothes and recover lost arts, making rough mats and using a fine kind of net.⁵¹ But none could replace sealskins for warmth or comfort.

Fortunately for Moriori, the sealing trade on the Chathams went into abeyance for about fifteen years from 1810. This had nothing to do with them, or with the cessation of the East India Company’s vast trading monopoly; it was driven by the greed of NSW sealers. The discovery of Macquarie Island in 1810 drew attention—in its first season, over one hundred thousand skins were procured, although this declined rapidly as sealers could not restrain themselves from unconscionable overharvesting.⁵² Political decisions also reduced demand: discriminatory duties levelled in both Sydney and London ate heavily into profits. Moreover, prices collapsed in Europe; demand for skins fell off from 1808 at the same time as supply was high.⁵³ Hence, sealing throughout the southern Pacific declined sharply. Ian W. G. Smith speculates that, in some years during the decade beginning after 1810, only one sealing vessel visited New Zealand.⁵⁴ The only confirmed Chathams visit between 1810 and 1825 was that of colonial brig *Sophia*, which sealed there in early 1818 on a nineteen-week voyage from Hobart.⁵⁵ Richards suggests that other Australian visitors, especially sealing ships owned by James Underwood’s brother Joseph, probably visited in this period.⁵⁶ Records are so scarce, however, that it is presently impossible to speculate with greater precision.

Peak sealing: 1825–1835

Sealing picked up from 1825, and with more sources available it is possible to gauge to a greater extent the changes to the Chathams’ demography, economy, and environment. Tapp claims that the sealing “chapter” of Australian and New Zealand history closed in 1816 with the discovery of the South Shetland sealing ground, but this is patently untrue.⁵⁷ Smith’s statistics show that sealing in New Zealand and adjacent islands reached its greatest extent during the 1820s.⁵⁸ Hundreds if not thousands of colonists careered through the Chathams, where sealing peaked in the late 1820s and early 1830s, gradually giving way to whaling during the 1830s. Not all of these visitors came from NSW: the first confirmed visitor after the *Sophia* in 1818 was the *Henry*, of New York, in 1825.⁵⁹ Later that year, the Hobart sloop *Sally* visited for two weeks. In 1879, one crew-member, Edwin Palmer, recalled the voyage. They procured water on Chatham Island and observed Moriori dressed in both sealskins and fairly basic flax mats—a sign of the necessary changes in clothing. Palmer found Moriori to be a “quiet lot” of “fine able fellows” who

⁵⁰Amery, “Koche,” 549.

⁵¹Shand, “Moriori People” (part one), 83.

⁵²*Sydney Gazette*, 22 April 1815, 1 (supplement).

⁵³D. R. Hainsworth, “Exploiting the Pacific Frontier: The New South Wales Sealing Industry, 1800–1821,” *Journal of Pacific History* 2 (1967): 67, 72.

⁵⁴Ian W. G. Smith, *The New Zealand Sealing Industry: History, Archaeology, and Heritage Management* (Wellington: Department of Conservation, 2002), 16.

⁵⁵*Hobart Town Gazette*, 28 March 1818, 2.

⁵⁶Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 31–325.

⁵⁷Tapp, *Early New Zealand*, 18.

⁵⁸Smith, *New Zealand Sealing*, 12.

⁵⁹Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 345.

did not trouble visitors.⁶⁰ The *Sally* returned to find VDL had become a separate colony from NSW in December 1825, about the time it was at the Chathams. On the way home, the *Sally* encountered the NSW brig *Elizabeth* heading to the Chathams for sealing.⁶¹ Interest in the islands had rekindled.

Increased activity led to more environmental changes than the decline in the seal population. One observation comes from Captain John Biscoe of the brig *Tula*, the leader of the Southern Ocean Expedition commissioned by the London-based company Samuel Enderby and Sons to seek new sealing grounds. Biscoe sailed from Hobart on 10 October 1831 and sealed at the Chathams during November and December before discovering Adelaide Island and Graham Land in February 1832.⁶² He interacted with Moriori, three of whom briefly boarded his vessel, and noted at least two introduced species. One, pigs, were not startling—introduced by previous visitors, probably in the 1820s, they constituted food for sealers, and Biscoe's men hunted them. Biscoe did not expect the other, however: when he visited South East Island, "to my great surprise [I] saw a large Black Cat".⁶³ This cat, of unknown origin, probably preyed upon rats and native birds. Kiore (Polynesian rats, *Rattus exulans*) came to the Chathams with Moriori, but sealers and whalers introduced other species, notably the Norwegian rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). Shand, with unusual imprecision, states these were introduced by a "wrecked whaleship" and exterminated kiore.⁶⁴ The latter claim is untrue—kiore exist on the Chathams to this day—and the former claim probably refers to the sealer *Glory*. The two species of rat are capable of coexistence, but predation of Norwegian rats on kiore is documented and they undoubtedly affected the Chathams' ecosystem.⁶⁵ The introduction of cats and *R. norvegicus* had immediate consequences, especially for native birds. The shore plover (*Thinornis novaeseelandiae*), for example, was extirpated from Chatham Island before 1840.⁶⁶ With NSW and VDL at the forefront of the sealing industry, it is safe to surmise they made the greatest contribution to the Chathams' changing ecology.

The sealers of 1804–1810 lived only temporarily on shore and left no records to suggest any stayed permanently, but in this renewed burst of activity, a trend began towards more stable settlement. The first permanent settler arrived by accident, when the *Glory* was wrecked on Pitt Island, giving its name to Glory Bay and capturing the unpredictability of careering on the imperial fringe. It had sailed from Sydney under the command of Captain Thomas Swindells for "the seal fishery" on 18 July 1826.⁶⁷ While laying at

⁶⁰Conversation between Dr T. M. Hocken and William and George (Edwin) Palmer, Otakia, 12 July 1879, in Neil Colquhoun Begg Papers, Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, MS-1356/086. Most holdings relevant to the Chathams at the Hocken and other New Zealand repositories describe events after 1842, which are beyond the scope of this article.

⁶¹*Hobart Town Gazette*, 10 June 1826, 2.

⁶²*Hobart Town Courier*, 3 January 1834, 4.

⁶³John Biscoe, *Tula* journal, 2 December 1831. The original was scanned for the Australian Joint Copying Project and appears in reel M 1573; it is also reproduced as Appendix B in Robert McNab, *The Old Whaling Days: A History of Southern New Zealand from 1830 to 1840* (Christchurch: Whitcomb and Tombs, 1913), 414–22; the events described are on p. 420.

⁶⁴Shand, "Moriore People" (part one), 81.

⁶⁵I. A. E. Atkinson, "Spread of the Ship Rat in New Zealand," *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 3, no. 3 (1973): 458–9; Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith, Douglas G. Sutton, Thegn N. Ladefoged, David M. Lambert, and John S. Allen, "Prehistoric Mobility in Polynesia: MtDNA Variation in *Rattus exulans* from the Chatham and Kermadec Islands," *Asian Perspectives* 38, no. 2 (1999): 191–3.

⁶⁶John E. Dowding and Elaine C. Murphy, "The Impact of Predation by Introduced Mammals on Endemic Shorebirds in New Zealand: A Conservation Perspective," *Biological Conservation* 99 (2001): 54.

⁶⁷*Australian*, 19 July 1826, 3.

anchor on 15 January 1827, it struck ground, and heavy swells thwarted salvage attempts. Swindells ran the ship ashore, saving its sails, rigging, crew, and hundreds of sealskins.⁶⁸ He and five of his men made a remarkable voyage of almost 1,300 kilometres in an open longboat to raise the alarm at the Bay of Islands at the northern end of the North Island.⁶⁹ The rest of the crew resided on the Chathams until Swindells returned in May to recover them and the cargo. When he reached Sydney in late June with 1,800 sealskins, it was the last time a quantity of sealskins greater than a thousand was landed there.⁷⁰ But not all crewmembers left: at least one, Jacob Tealing, remained to lead a group of Moriori and, in subsequent years, other Pākehā in provisioning ships. He lived on Chatham Island until his death on 15 November 1855.⁷¹

Another interesting individual is Tommy Chaseland, born in Sydney circa 1797 to a convict father and an Aboriginal mother.⁷² He and his Māori wife, Puna, were shipwrecked on the Chathams, possibly on the *Glory*, in the late 1820s. They lived on Pitt long enough to build a boat and acquire food, and then made for New Zealand, landing at Moeraki in Otago.⁷³ By 1832, three more ex-sealers and “Charley”, a Māori, resided permanently on the Chathams.⁷⁴ Another settler, former Sydney sealer James Coffee, arrived in January 1833 to live among this “simple, harmless race of people” and married a Moriori woman.⁷⁵ Although syphilis indicates earlier sexual liaisons, this is the first known example of intimacy between Pākehā and Moriori. In 1835, a visiting ship reported that “eight or ten runaways” lived on Chatham Island.⁷⁶ These settlers were a motley bunch, arriving for diverse reasons: accident, fleeing sealing jobs, or dissatisfaction with European social norms. Some had convict backgrounds; others were Māori or, in at least Chaseland’s case, Aboriginal. They participated in Moriori society and, like Pākehā-Māori in New Zealand, were adaptable foreigners who straddled multiple cultures.

The imperial encounter was not always peaceful: contact brought crime and disease. By 1840, the Chathams were “considered as a nest of rogues”.⁷⁷ The most sensational criminality occurred after eighteen convicts seized the brig *Cyprus* in Recherche Bay, VDL, in August 1829.⁷⁸ Under William Swallow’s command, it posed as an American vessel and sailed to New Zealand. The mutineers then made for Tahiti, but rough weather drove them off course and in December they reached Owenga Bay, Chatham Island. When

⁶⁸*Australian*, 20 March 1827, 3.

⁶⁹*Australian*, 27 March 1827, 3.

⁷⁰Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 36S.

⁷¹King, *A Land Apart*, 25–6.

⁷²For more on Chaseland’s remarkable life, see Lynette Russell, “‘A New Holland Half-Caste’: Sealer and Whaler Tommy Chaseland,” *History Australia* 5, no. 1 (2008): 1–15; and Nigel Prickett, “Trans-Tasman Stories: Australian Aborigines in New Zealand Sealing and Shore Whaling,” *Terra Australis* 29 (2008): 352–7.

⁷³The Māori tradition of this voyage was recorded by Herries Beattie, “Casual Allusions to the Whalers Made by Maoris in Interviews Between 1900 and 1950,” Herries Beattie Papers, Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, MS-582/G/9. Chaseland himself described it to at least two Pākehā visitors: Edward Shortland, *The Southern Districts of New Zealand* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851), 153; and David Monro, “Notes from a Journey Through a Part of the Middle Island of New Zealand,” *Nelson Examiner*, 24 August 1844, 99.

⁷⁴King, *Moriiori*, 52.

⁷⁵E. A. Welch, “An Account of the Chatham Islands,” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 8 (1870–1871): xcvi (Welch interviewed Coffee).

⁷⁶*Sydney Monitor*, 20 May 1835, 2.

⁷⁷Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, 1838–42*, vol. 2 (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1845), 404.

⁷⁸A good brief account of the seizure is John Mulvaney, “*The Axe Had Never Sounded*”: *Place, People and Heritage of Recherche Bay, Tasmania* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2007), 96–8.

Swallow and four other mutineers were later captured in London and charged with piracy, he neglected to mention the purpose of his Chathams visit: plunder.⁷⁹ It was an unpleasant twist in the encounter with colonial Australia. The mutineers first raided a Moriori village and then targeted a sealing gang, taking anything of value.⁸⁰ Significantly, this provides another example of Moriori and sealers living in close proximity: the plundered sealers would have relied upon Moriori generosity and resources until restocked or rescued by a passing vessel. More insidious than criminality were diseases to which Moriori possessed no immunity. Sealers introduced measles and influenza; epidemics occurred between 1828 and 1832.⁸¹ The Moriori population in 1835 was approximately 1,650 and Richards estimates the decline from 1791—from all causes—was at least 350. He considers this a bare minimum and that many more probably died.⁸² The world of 1835 was a much different place for Moriori to that of a generation earlier. It was more sinister, stalked by terrifying illnesses; its environment was less bountiful; and Moriori were losing control of the archipelago's economy. All of this was attributable to the uninvited colonial encounter and the trajectory of many careers.

The Māori invasion of 1835

The most significant change, and one that the colonial encounter facilitated, was the arrival of Māori. The first Māori visitors came as members of sealing crews on colonial vessels—Puna is one example. Several others, mainly from southern North Island iwi, resided for extended periods in the early 1830s.⁸³ They bestowed the Māori name Whar-ekauri on the Chathams after a house allegedly built from salvaged kauri timber.⁸⁴ However, the encounter between Māori and Moriori turned ominous in approximately 1833, when Ngāti Mutunga chief Matoro arrived on a Sydney sealing vessel. Koche recalled that Matoro quizzed Moriori on their politics and customs. When Matoro intentionally profaned a sacred location with a pot from the ship on which he arrived, a party of thirteen Moriori—including Koche—smashed the pot. Matoro, accompanied by sailors with bulldogs, pursued the thirteen for “vandalism”. They ran but did not resist; Matoro shot dead one Moriori and hung the other twelve upside down from a tree.⁸⁵ He had tested the Moriori temper, and found their commitment to tradition and nonviolence was strong.

Matoro was a harbinger of the violence that ensued from 1835. He stayed on the island with Coffee's community, but—as German missionary Johann Godfried Engst discovered—four other individuals from Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama conveyed the news of

⁷⁹Warwick Hirst, *The Man Who Stole the Cyprus: A True Story of Escape* (Dural: Rosenberg Publishing, 2008), 100; D. C. S. Sissons, “The Voyage of the Cyprus Mutineers: Did They Ever Enter Japanese Waters?,” *Journal of Pacific History* 43, no. 2 (2008): 254.

⁸⁰*Australian*, 12 February 1830, 2; *Sydney Monitor*, 17 February 1830, 4.

⁸¹Shand, “Occupation” (part two), 160; King, *Mori*, 49–50.

⁸²Richards, “Tentative Population Distribution,” 356–7. Atholl Anderson suggests the overall population estimate may be too high as it implies a dense population; “Retrievable Time: Prehistoric Colonisation of South Polynesia from the Outside In and the Inside Out,” in *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006), 27.

⁸³See King, *Mori*, 52; Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 435; and Shand, “Occupation” (part two), 154 for examples.

⁸⁴King, *Mori*, 52.

⁸⁵Amery, “Koche,” 550; Ernest Dieffenbach—who spoke to Koche or other participants in 1840—corroborates this in “An Account of the Chatham Islands,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 11 (1841): 210.

Moriori pacifism to New Zealand in 1834.⁸⁶ Both iwi were displaced from northern Taranaki during the Musket Wars, described in more detail below. In the early 1830s, they lived among potentially treacherous allies in the Wellington region, lacking wealth or security.⁸⁷ Hence the Chathams were attractive: a nearby archipelago that would be easy to conquer. In November 1835, the Sydney brig *Rodney*, commanded by Captain J. B. Harewood, entered Port Nicholson (Wellington Harbour) for trade. The two iwi seized the ship.⁸⁸ They were aware that if they kidnapped or killed the crew, they might attract reprisals from NSW; the previous year, British troops were sent from Sydney to New Zealand after an attack on the *Harriet* in Taranaki. Hence the iwi compensated the crew for their time instead of killing them. They “treated all hands very kindly during the seizure of the vessel” and Harewood found them “extremely anxious to know whether the Governor of Port Jackson would be angry with them for what they had done”.⁸⁹ No recriminations followed from any colonial authority. Not all members of either iwi sailed; some hapū (sub-tribes) stayed in the North Island and were not involved, while about 900 Māori sailed to the Chathams.

Although Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama were worried about how Sydney or London would perceive molestation of Pākehā, they knew concern did not extend to violence between indigenous peoples. Soon after arrival on the Chathams, they claimed the islands. One Ngāti Mutunga participant emphasised that “we caught all the people. Not one escaped ... what of that?”⁹⁰ The death toll of the initial invasion was about 300, a sixth of the Moriori population, and the rest were enslaved. By 1848, only 268 Moriori remained alive, declining to 113 in 1867.⁹¹ Māori “disdained to intermarry” with Moriori and even prohibited marriages between Moriori until the 1860s.⁹² One Pākehā visitor found “the ordinary lot of these ill-fated wretches” was “ulcerated backs bent almost double, and emaciated, paralytic limbs with diseased lungs”.⁹³

The ability of Moriori to respond to the invasion was already weakened by the deleterious effects of previous colonial contact. To understand fully the forces that underpinned the treatment of Moriori during and after conquest, it is necessary to identify colonial Australia’s twofold contribution: technology and ideology. The invasion of the Chathams was impossible without technologies acquired through contact and careering. Most vessels that visited the Chathams came from Sydney and Hobart. Sealers and traders brought Māori as crew, thus sharing knowledge of the archipelago. Without the *Rodney*, Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama would have been unable to travel in November 1835. Without the knowledge acquired from colonial visitors or the mobility they provided, the invasion could not have been attempted. The Chathams’ centuries of isolation are sufficient proof that concerted migration was highly improbable before the colonial encounter.

⁸⁶Johann Godfried Engst, *More Than Fifty Years on Chatham Island*, comp. Bruno Weiss, trans. K. J. Dennison (Dunedin: Department of Anatomy, University of Otago, 1991 [1901]), 8.

⁸⁷Shand, “Occupation” (part one), 83–94.

⁸⁸Accounts of what followed diverge on particulars, but the central narrative is not disputed. The most detailed account from Harewood is *Sydney Herald*, 29 January 1836, 2. Shand, “Occupation” (part two), derives from Māori sources.

⁸⁹*Sydney Herald*, 25 January 1836, 2; 29 January 1836, 2.

⁹⁰Rakatau Katihe, 16 July 1870, Chatham Islands minute book 1, Māori Land Court (CAMW), CH299, item R2110318, Archives New Zealand.

⁹¹WT, *Rekohu*, 42, 66; H. Halse, “Report of the Chatham Islands,” *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* 1867 A-04, 7.

⁹²Dieffenbach, “Account,” 208; William Seed, “Appendix I: Chatham Islands,” *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1861, ii.

⁹³Dieffenbach, “Account,” 208.

Also significant was the introduction of the musket to New Zealand from NSW. It imbued Māori warfare with heightened lethality and caused considerable population dislocation. The Musket Wars, as they are popularly known, raged from the late 1810s to the early 1840s.⁹⁴ Māori warfare before the nineteenth century was not annihilationist; it was often waged by small raiding parties, and death tolls were rarely high even in large confrontations.⁹⁵ The colonial encounter caused a shift. By 1814, some Māori had acquired muskets from visiting colonial vessels in exchange for goods and provisions.⁹⁶ Initially used for hunting, muskets became weapons of war. Profit-hungry careerists sold muskets in large quantities, and battles were catastrophically asymmetrical in early years when only some iwi were armed.⁹⁷ In 1831 alone, 6,000 guns were imported from Sydney, traded for flax.⁹⁸ Motivations for warfare had not necessarily changed, but the level of bloodshed was unparalleled. The death toll is difficult to establish—one study suggests that up to twenty per cent of the Māori population died, while another calls into question casualty rates so high.⁹⁹ Many iwi and hapū either fled as refugees or chose to relocate for conquest or security. These upheavals drove Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama to Port Nicholson. It was by no means the intention of colonial traders or administrators to destabilise New Zealand, but the eagerness of Māori for muskets and the willingness of traders to sell them created the disruption that made a new homeland important for Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama. Without the musket trade, the desire of either iwi to leave the North Island would not have been present—even if the ships were.

Perspectives on the Chathams invasion have varied. Nineteenth-century white authors recounted violence breathlessly and exaggerated any evidence of cannibalism.¹⁰⁰ Some scholars have moderated suggestions of brutality. H. D. Skinner concludes that a “verdict of unmitigated barbarity ... is not justified”, based on a low casualty estimate and without consideration for intent or subsequent events. Angela Ballara claims initial casualties were “moderate” and later deaths “unintended”.¹⁰¹ Neither perspective can be justified. The appropriate response to Victorian depictions of Māori as savage cannibals is not to downplay violence. The death of a sixth of the population was catastrophic and set in motion the sharp decline of Moriori. Ballara’s own prior research into iwi growth and demise, as well as Atholl Anderson’s investigation of Ngai Tahu’s somewhat misnamed “invasion” of New Zealand’s South Island, demonstrate that Māori conquest was typically achieved by piecemeal migration, feuding, and intermarriage in equal measure.¹⁰² This did not occur on the Chathams.

⁹⁴Recent treatments of this complex period include Angela Ballara, *Taua: ‘Musket Wars’, ‘Land Wars’ or Tikanga? Warfare in Māori Society in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003); R. D. Crosby, *The Musket Wars: A History of Inter-Iwi Conflict 1806–1845* (Oratia: Libro International, 2012 [1999]); and Matthew Wright, *Guns and Utu: A Short History of the Musket Wars* (Auckland: Penguin, 2011).

⁹⁵Michael King, *Nga Iwi o te Motu: One Thousand Years of Māori History* (Auckland: Reed, 1997), 20.

⁹⁶Standfield, *Race and Identity*, chapter four; Salmond, *Between Worlds*, 438.

⁹⁷Wright, *Guns and Utu*, 22, 122–5.

⁹⁸James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland: Penguin, 1996), 165.

⁹⁹Wright, *Guns and Utu*, 20, 43; Ballara, *Taua*, 45–6.

¹⁰⁰Frederick Hunt, *Twenty-Five Years’ Experience in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands*, ed. John Amery (Wellington: William Lyon, 1866), 37; Engst, *More than Fifty Years*, 9–10.

¹⁰¹H. D. Skinner, *The Morioris of Chatham Island* (Papakura: Southern Reprints, 1990 [1923]), 33; Angela Ballara, *Taua*, 88.

¹⁰²Angela Ballara, *Iwi: The Dynamics of Māori Tribal Organisation from c.1769 to c.1945* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1998), especially chapters 10–13; Atholl Anderson, *When All the Moa Ovens Grew Cold: Nine Centuries of Changing Fortune for the Southern Māori* (Dunedin: Otago Heritage Books, 1983), 38–46; Anderson, *The Welcome of Strangers: An Ethnohistory of Southern Māori AD 1650–1850* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 1998), chapters 1–3, especially 57–9.

I have argued elsewhere for the value of describing the violence as genocidal;¹⁰³ here I show that this bloodshed was linked to ideas acquired in the colonial encounter. Tropes about Māori and Aboriginal peoples differed markedly, and their transmission to Māori shaped how Moriori were understood. Europeans in Oceania established a distinct racial hierarchy by the early nineteenth century, differentiating Polynesians from indigenous peoples of Australia and New Guinea. To them, Polynesian peoples were comparatively advanced and attractive while Aboriginal peoples represented humanity's crudest form. Māori were warriors with hierarchical communities, positive qualities to Europeans, while Aboriginal peoples were depicted contemptuously as wanderers with no social hierarchy who would offer little resistance to the seizure of their land.¹⁰⁴ Samuel Marsden, colonial chaplain of NSW, played a significant role in transmitting knowledge and stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples to Māori. He was an enthusiastic evangelist to New Zealand and established the Parramatta Māori Seminary in 1815 for the instruction of young Māori men. His positive opinion of Māori contrasted with his views on Aboriginal peoples, whom he considered "the most degraded of the human race ... addicted to drunkenness and idleness and vice". He believed that Māori were "disgusted altogether" with Aboriginal peoples—and the hierarchy he promoted fostered such opinions.¹⁰⁵

These derogatory depictions of Aboriginal peoples reached Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama by the 1830s, and colonial sealers contributed directly to their application to Moriori. Sealers referred to Moriori as "blackfella", a comparison to Aboriginal peoples based on perceived shared physical features.¹⁰⁶ "Blackfella" entered the Māori vocabulary as "paraiwhara", laden with pejorative baggage; tropes of Aboriginality were easily applied to the non-hierarchical and peaceful Moriori. Māori, who valued bravery in combat, did not look favourably upon Moriori pacifism. Hazel Petrie highlights the use of the word paraiwhara as distinctive. The Māori language has a wide vocabulary to connote status, yet, to describe Moriori, this new word acquired from sealers entered the lexicon to articulate a status lesser than that of any pre-existing term. Petrie emphasises that this provides a significant window into comprehending Māori attitudes towards Moriori: the word paraiwhara was derived from negative perceptions of Aboriginal peoples, a belief the British had enslaved them, and European narratives that itinerant and non-hierarchical people were inherently inferior.¹⁰⁷

Hence the Māori invaders viewed Moriori as a lesser people rather than a rival iwi. The view of Aboriginal inferiority transposed onto Moriori explains their severe treatment. Frederick Hunt, an early Pitt Island settler, emphasised that the word paraiwhara was "synonymous with slavery" for Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama.¹⁰⁸ Such enslavement

¹⁰³Brett, "Colonial Genocide and the Moriori."

¹⁰⁴Standfield, *Race and Identity*, 179–81; Bronwen Douglas, "'Novus Orbis Australis': Oceania in the Science of Race, 1750–1850," in *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race, 1750–1940*, ed. Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (Canberra: ANU ePress, 2008), 99–155.

¹⁰⁵Samuel Marsden to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, 24 February 1819, in *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden 1765–1838* (Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie, 1932), 230–2; Rachel Standfield, "The Parramatta Māori Seminary and the Education of Indigenous Peoples in Early Colonial New South Wales," *History of Education Review* 41, no. 2 (2012): 119–28.

¹⁰⁶Dieffenbach, "Account," 208.

¹⁰⁷Hazel Petrie, *Outcasts of the Gods? The Struggle over Slavery in Māori New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2015), 35–7; see also "Decoding the Colours of Rank in Māori Society: What Might They Tell Us About Perceptions of War Captives?," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 120, no. 3 (2011): 226–7.

¹⁰⁸Hunt, *Twenty-Five Years*, 26.

was outside Māori tradition. Petrie observes that “so-called slavery in Māori society bore little resemblance to the trans-Atlantic trade in Africans” and typically referred to war captives whose children were free.¹⁰⁹ On the Chathams, however, Moriori formed a hereditary slave class defined by beliefs about “Australia’s paraiwhara”. Māori fathers derided mixed-descent children as paraiwhara and did not accept them.¹¹⁰ When George Augustus Selwyn, the Anglican Bishop of New Zealand, visited the Chathams in 1848, he found that Moriori performed onerous tasks and were worked to exhaustion.¹¹¹ This entire ideology—genocidal in the manner it defined a victim group and justified their killing, enslavement, and restrictions on childbirth—was informed by the colonial encounter with Australia and would not have otherwise existed.

Conclusion

In the final seven years of the pre-colonial period, the influence of NSW and VDL waned. Māori took control from 1835 and other external actors gained prominence. Sealing collapsed; one sealer interviewed in 1840 procured only fifty sealskins in the preceding two years.¹¹² Whalers replaced sealers from the mid-1830s. They initially came from Sydney but better equipped Americans took the lead; in the period 1835–1888, four American whaling ships visited the Chathams for every one of differing origin.¹¹³ The most dramatic event between invasion and New Zealand’s annexation involved the French—the massacre of *Jean Bart*’s whaling crew after a misunderstanding with Māori.¹¹⁴ By 1840, interest developed in the Chathams as a site for organised colonisation. The New Zealand Company, which founded most of New Zealand’s early settlements, made arrangements for a German colony that foundered upon Colonial Office objections.¹¹⁵ The Chathams became a New Zealand possession from 4 April 1842, ruled—albeit distantly—by the larger western archipelago.

But colonial Australia’s lead influence in the first four decades of the nineteenth century cannot be erased. It was formative in shaping the Chathams’ economy, demography, and environment. Sydney traders careered to the Chathams and led its exploitation, slowly but surely—and secretly—drawing the islands into the global economy. This had broader consequences. The Chathams’ environment was altered, with seals almost exterminated and other animals introduced, necessitating changes to Moriori diet and culture. New people arrived: first sealers and runaways, then two invading Māori iwi. These iwi ushered in the most devastating change: genocide. They invaded after upheavals in the North Island, facilitated in no small measure by trade with colonial Australia; they secured mobility from a colonial ship; and their ideas of Moriori inferiority were defined by knowledge of Australia, specifically of Aboriginal peoples—right down to

¹⁰⁹Petrie, “Decoding the Colours,” 211–12.

¹¹⁰WT, *Rekohu*, 45.

¹¹¹G. A. Selwyn, *A Journal of the Bishop’s Visitation Tour Through His Diocese, Including a Visit to the Chatham Islands, in the Year 1848* (Christchurch: Kiwi Publishers, 2002 [1849]), 98–9.

¹¹²Dieffenbach, “Account,” 207.

¹¹³Richards, *Whaling and Sealing*, 4–9W; Rhys Richards, *American Whaling on the Chatham Grounds* (Nantucket: Nantucket Historical Association, 1971).

¹¹⁴Documents related to this event can be found in *L’affaire Jean Bart: The Jean Bart Affair*, ed. Caroline Cambridge and Peter Tremewan (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1998).

¹¹⁵Sheila Natusch, *Hell and High Water: A German Occupation of the Chatham Islands, 1843–1910* (Christchurch: Pegasus, 1977), 56–7.

the derisive name *paraiwhara*. Moriori, already pressed to respond to decades of uninvited change, suffered greatly. By the time the Chathams were annexed to New Zealand, contact with colonial Australia had been profound and its consequences were enduring.

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